

Preparing Urban Teachers as Public Professionals through a University-Community Partnership

By Cynthia Onore & Bonny Gildin

It has been recognized for many years that preparing teachers for high-need urban schools is a challenge requiring a reexamination of teacher education program structures and content. Robert Farls, for example, writing in 1969, made a number of suggestions that sound remarkably contemporary. Among them are recommendations to increase fieldwork in the schools, require coursework in comparative culture, offer coursework on-site in schools, and study human relations, psychology, and the history of the civil rights movement (p. 411). His central concern is develop-

ing teachers' capacities to work effectively with poor children of color. Though his language is different, many of Farls' recommendations have found expression in current urban teacher preparation initiatives.

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Deepening and enriching the knowledge of urban teaching candidates for working with a diverse student body has become a central tenet of preparation programs (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Coursework that attempts to develop new teachers' perspectives on diversity and multiculturalism as assets rather than deficits has been woven into teacher preparation curricula (Banks, 1994; Banks, & Banks,

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2004; Banks & Banks, 2010; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Ladsen-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2007), while the application of multicultural insights and affirming attitudes towards diversity can be found in the study of culturally responsive teaching practices (Banks, et al, 2001; Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Ladsen-Billings, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Taken together, such coursework offers opportunities for preservice teachers to generate new knowledge about and appreciation of diverse cultures and communities and support deep examination of their own beliefs and assumptions. At the same time, it provides them with frameworks for developing pedagogy and curriculum for educational equity and cross cultural competency, a commitment both emotional and intellectual, to appreciate difference while recognizing the fundamental unity of all humans (McAllister & Jordan-Irvine, 2000).

Recognizing that academic course work alone, no matter how transformative its intentions, may be insufficient to educate teachers of diverse students, courses of study for urban teacher preparation have made knowledge of family, home, and community integral to teaching and learning. A “funds of knowledge” approach (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004), for example, adds a critical element to developing cross cultural competence by making explicit how the knowledge and skills of families and communities can be brought to bear in teaching learners from underrepresented groups. Such an approach helps teachers establish ties between home and school that can greatly enrich student achievement.

A more robust form of community-based learning combines service learning and diversity education to create multicultural service learning through which preservice teachers not only learn about the assets of students’ home communities but also about community-defined needs (Boyle-Baise, 2002; Boyle-Baise & Grant, 2000; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; Carter-Andrews, 2009; Grineski, 2003). Combined with ethnographic inquiry and action research, these kinds of field experiences can help teachers to interrogate and modify their beliefs and assumptions and even to understand their work as part of an explicit social justice agenda that privileges access to knowledge and equitable education over individual, meritocratic success (Hyland & Nofke, 2005; Tiezzi & Cross, 1997). Each of these efforts can contribute to educating the “community teacher” (Murrell, 2001), one who can “draw on a richly contextualized knowledge of culture, community, and identity” (p. 4).

Despite progress in urban teacher preparation over the past forty years, concerns still remain about transforming programs and practices in order to affect teachers’ capacities to work with culturally diverse communities. These concerns include time in course curricula for discussion and reflection on field-based work, adequate supervision in fieldwork sites, time for maintaining contact between universities and field sites, and the limitations of the “one shot deal” (Carter Andrews, 2009). Additionally, multicultural service learning and community-based learning have had mixed results as some participants’ negative beliefs about urban children and communities emerge as intractable, and program experiences have unwittingly reinforced rather than transformed those attitudes (Cross, 2006; Leland & Harste, 2005; McAllister &

Irvine, 2000; Sleeter, 2001; Tiezzi & Cross, 1997). As Sleeter (2001) has concluded in her comprehensive review of multicultural teacher education, “extensive community-based immersion experiences coupled with coursework seem to have the most promise” (p. 102), but she is less than fully confident that universities will invest their resources in this work. More evidence of this may be found in a recent study of 161 schools and colleges of education in which, despite increased awareness of the importance of community knowledge for preparing education professionals for working with diverse communities, structural, organizational, and attitudinal factors deeply affect the extent to which institutions are able to do so (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Clearly, then, the challenges facing urban teacher preparation persist.

Teachers as Public Professionals

A promising direction for meeting these challenges may be derived from Robert Yinger’s (2005) call to reconceptualize teaching as a “public profession.” To do so requires a thorough-going reexamination of the role of schools in society and a renegotiation of the social contract (p. 286). This would require dismantling the focus on schooling as market-mined and market-driven, that is, schools as sites which privilege individual achievement and individual good—and replacing them with a perspective on schools as sites for educating publics in civic virtues—virtues which center on understanding our rights as individuals alongside of and in balance with our responsibilities to our communities; understanding the interdependences of community members, even those with unequal power; and seeking and finding shared values and goals with others in order to produce forms of life that benefit the wider public. In such a renegotiated public space, the nature of teachers’ work is consequently altered.

If the institutions of schools were constructed in this way, their relationships to the community would be fundamentally altered. They would not simply occupy spaces within a community, but they would see their work as embedded in the community and, thus, intimately tied to community values and goals. These goals and values would also be collectively established and collaboratively carried out. In such school settings, teachers would recognize their work as a connected enterprise, as facets of the same work that is carried out by parents, cultural and religious organizations, and social service agencies. Teaching, then, would be an aspect of social activism. Teachers would understand that their work is animated by the collaborative exploration of educational issues, the identification of mutually valuable social projects, and undergirded by a commitment to civic values, all of which simultaneously serve educational purposes (Yinger, p 289). The civic values to which Yinger refers are informed by a special set of civic virtues that are a special requirement in a diverse and multicultural society. They include publicly deliberating contested issues, seeking mutual understanding, a commitment to dialogue over diatribe, and collective meaning-making over individual gain (Kymlicka, 2002, p. 293).

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Civic virtues of this kind are best expressed through covenantal relationships, according to Yinger, relationships which make it possible to develop mutual understanding and are defined by their reciprocity. Through such relationships, separate purposes are rendered as common purposes and a new context is created. At the same time, the nature of teachers' work and the role of citizens in the work of education would be redefined. While it is not Yinger's intention to apply this view of the teaching profession to urban contexts especially, nor to offer recommendations for teacher education, his framework offers a compelling way to frame university-community partnerships for urban teacher preparation.

In this article, we will describe the beginning phases of a new partnership for urban teacher preparation between a university teacher education program and a non-profit, youth and community development organization that is exploring how to prepare new urban teachers to be public professionals.

The Partners and What They Bring to This Work

The All Stars Project, Inc

The All Stars Project, Inc. (ASP) is a 28 year old, privately-funded, nonprofit that sponsors outside of school development programs for poor, urban youth of color, reaching 10,000 youth a year in four cities—New York City, Newark, New Jersey, Oakland/San Francisco, and Chicago. Completely funded by the private sector (primarily contributions from individuals), ASP has been relatively free of bureaucratic constraints and has created a new, youth development model that has built on theoretical inquiry in psychology and philosophy (e.g., the work of Vygotsky and Wittgenstein) and is grounded in the belief that personal and social growth and development are preconditional for learning—"what you get from development is the need and desire to learn" (Newman, 2010).

As the organization evolved, the understanding that the human capacity to play and to perform can foster growth at any age, has figured centrally in all of its programs. Performance allows young people to do new things and stretch beyond what they already know how to do. It supports them to actively create new ways to be in the world, and also makes possible the creation of new shared experiences through which they and "the other" (be they youth from other neighborhoods, or the many adults who are or who want to be in their lives) can come to know and grow together in new ways. ASP development through performance programs include repeating cycles of neighborhood talent shows (All Stars Talent Show Network) in which "everybody makes it," a youth theatre program (Youth Onstage!) in which high school age participants receive free theater training and create original performance pieces that express what they have to say about the world and its future, and leadership training (Development School for Youth) in which high school participants interact with successful (and often primarily white) adults in workshop "ensemble performances" in corporate and cosmopolitan settings. ASP recently

adopted a new, performance-based program, Operation Conversation: Cops and Kids, which creates the potential for transforming one of the most difficult relationships in urban communities.

The All Stars Project established an operation in Newark in 1999 and currently involves close to 1,500 young people a year in its program activities. The Newark organization is supported by 600 individuals and corporations, 250 volunteers, and partners with more than 50 corporations which provide paid summer internships to youth who complete the organization's leadership training program.

Concepts of After School and All Stars Project as New Spaces for Growth

Community-based, after school and youth development programs have the power to identify and address the kinds of issues that Yinger identifies as those of the social contract. In many ways these kinds of programs are a natural vehicle through which preservice teachers can develop a broader identity as public professionals and participate in a larger social agenda. What can distinguish such programs is not just their location but also, through their intention to foster the development of youth, the capacity for being a force for transformation. Through developmental experiences young people learn that transformation is possible—that they can create their own lives—and also that they can, and need to, develop their communities.

Organized afterschool programs have been part of urban America since the turn of the last century. Current interest in afterschool programs focuses on how they can help play compensatory or supplemental roles relative to public schools, particularly those that serve poor and minority youth. Interestingly, as Robert Halpern points out in his history of afterschool programs for low income children, they actually have a rich history of service to urban children separate from that of school (Halpern, 2002, p. 179). Halpern traces how, as neither family nor school, afterschool has become a third, critical developmental setting for low and moderate income children (p. 179). He identifies a “struggle for identity” in the field. Afterschool has offered urban youth protection, care, opportunity for enrichment and play. It has also been a context for socialization, acculturation, training and problem remediation. However, afterschool providers have differed as to whether program activities should be shaped by children's interests and preferences or by what adults thought children needed. For Halpern, the struggle, ironically, has had positive consequences for afterschool programs and has created:

room to be a different kind of child development institution—one that mostly avoided pathologizing low income children and one that can identify gaps in children's lives and try to fill them. It allowed afterschool programs to be adult-directed institutions where the adult agenda is relatively modest. And it has allowed them to be responsive to the changing needs and circumstances in the lives of low income children. (Halpern, 2002, p. 179)

In this way, afterschool programs establish a different kind of space, one which the ASP characterizes as “room to grow.”

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After school programs have historically also had strong connections to the communities in which they are located (Halpern, 2002). The mission and focus of most of these programs ranged widely from keeping kids off the streets to more pointed positive youth development, e.g., nurturing young people's interests and talents in the arts (Halpern, 2002). Halpern cites Varenne and McDermott's (1998, p. xii) argument that schools "only have so much success to give," and that "after school programs can afford to be much more generous in this regard" (Halpern, 2002, p. 203). On the other hand, after school programs are under increasing pressure to make their activities more school-like and demonstrate that they help to improve test scores.

Recent research conducted by Gardner, Roth, and Brooks-Gunn (2009) suggests that the academic benefits of after school youth development are modest at best, or at least they are not ones that evidence themselves through traditional academic measures. Again, this has a positive consequence, in that it locates after school outside a narrow, instrumental educational framework and opens the door to making its central focus the broader range of profound social, cultural and developmental issues that hold back poor children in general and African-American children in particular.

With roots in community organizing in the 1970s and 1980s and experimental, political theater, ASP is part of the broad history and tradition that Halpern describes, and many of the ASP's most distinguishing features come from its reconsideration at that time of the Great Society's fundamental assumptions and its approach to anti-poverty work (All Stars Project, Inc., 2007, p. 2).

ASP's conceptual framework also relates to the work of some contemporary black scholars who have continued to reflect on issues of identity in the African-American community and some of the ways in which it becomes categorical, rigid and defining. K. Anthony Appiah (1997) has developed the concept of—and also advocated for—what he calls the "cosmopolitan patriot," the individual who is a citizen of their particular country and at the same time a citizen of the world. For Appiah, the idea that one can have more than one cultural identity is an important one, because it means that where we happen to have been born, our ethnic, racial or religious ancestry, does not define, in a fixed way, who one is as a person. One's identity can be created and re-created.

Appiah's insights into the relationship between becoming cosmopolitan—becoming someone with multiple and layered identities—and development are related to key concepts in ASP's approach to developing inner city youth. Insofar as identity is construed in a narrow way, ASP argues that little growth is possible. Narrow identities give rise to narrow views of the world—and even create a tendency to view oneself as a victim of one's circumstances, rather than as a human being with the capacity to create one's life. A central ASP practice is to give young people the opportunity to participate in more cosmopolitan environments, and to be welcomed into them by adult insiders who treat them with respect while placing strong demands on them to perform. In organizing and creating these experiences,

ASP has discovered that young people choose to develop as learners and become active creators of their lives (Fulani, 2008).

Peter Murrell (2007) has also examined issues of identity development and learning, and the guiding principles of his Situated-Mediated Theory are consistent with the concepts under consideration by Appiah and ASP, for example, that identities are socially constructed and dynamic. As well, Murrell's suggestion that "school success is achievable when learning is understood as the acquisition of a set of preferred cultural practices" (p. 34) also offers a pathway towards creating more effective school environments; that is, if students and teachers approach the classroom as a "collective performance," which includes the creation of the different roles in that performance. If there is any point of difference, it is that the cosmopolitanization prescribed by Appiah and the ASP suggest that what could be most helpful for development, and therefore learning, is to give up the notion of identity altogether.

ASP has also brought these ideas and practices to bear on the current debate on the achievement gap, arguing for reframing the achievement gap as "the development gap" and for greater investigation of developmental, outside of school as the most promising, albeit, "out of the box" solution in the pursuit of educational equity. Fulani and Kurlander (2009) argue that the achievement gap does not accurately or adequately capture what is going on when the learning and development experiences of poor children of color are compared to those of middle class kids. "These kids are not simply failing to learn. They are failing to become learners... It is a development gap" (p. 2).

In reframing the problem, Fulani and Kurlander relocate the solution from school to outside of school.

If you examine the cultural and life history of White, middle-class young people in our society—the same kids who are performing well in school—you find that they are exposed to a range of developmental experiences that take place outside of the classroom... Poor kids have few life experiences of this kind. (p. 3)

Basing their argument on their experience as leaders of an urban youth development organization, and drawing support from Karl Alexander's research on "summer slide" as discussed in Gladwell (2008), Fulani and Kurlander identify outside of school programs as the best opportunity for providing experiences and environments to engage and reorganize the underdevelopment of inner city youth to prepare them to learn. The ASP emphasis on performance and play and its underlying commitment to development are examples of the "responsive practices" to which Yinger (2005) refers. Participation in these practices is one route for preservice urban teachers to explore "school problems as community problems and [to] seek community solutions" (p.287).

Montclair State University's Work in Newark, New Jersey

For more than thirty years, Montclair State University (MSU) has had thriving

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partnerships with the Newark Public Schools, including a professional development school (dismantled in 1995 when the state of New Jersey seized control of the Newark Schools) and a rich array of professional development activities for teachers through the MSU Network for Educational Renewal. Since 2001, MSU has offered the Urban Teaching Academy (UTA), a strand in its teacher preparation program expressly designed for students preparing to teach in urban schools. The UTA includes a summer internship in a community-based organization in Newark as well as on-site coursework in one of several Newark public schools.

Perhaps its most comprehensive collaboration to date is the Partnership for Instructional Excellence and Quality (PIE-Q), a consortium of seven Newark schools, the Newark Teachers Union, and the university. PIE-Q designs and offers programs for professional educators across the professional life span—from Future Educators' clubs for middle and high schoolers through preservice preparation, mentoring for beginning teachers, professional development for mentors and experienced teachers, and administrator development and support. Courses for students prior to admission to teacher education as well as those for preservice teachers are offered on-site in the Newark public schools every semester. Over the past decade, several large, grant-funded projects to recruit, support, and mentor elementary, math, science, and special education teachers have been collaborative ventures, as well, and most recently a Teacher Quality Partnership Grant to create an urban teacher residency program in Newark was awarded. In short, the university and the Newark Public Schools have long-standing and well-established collaborations.

Community Work in Urban Teacher Preparation

Collaboration with community-based organizations has also been a centerpiece of Montclair State University's urban teacher preparation programs. Many schools with large numbers of students of color are often isolated from their surrounding communities and not responsive to them (Gallego, 2001); therefore, it is important to provide opportunities to work with young people and their families outside of school. Such opportunities have been infused into the course of study of the UTA. Understanding that merely situating preparation on site in schools is insufficient to raise "a host of critical political, pedagogical and philosophical questions about the nature of teaching and the link between teaching and social justice" (Fraser, 2008, p. 252), the UTA includes a summer internship with organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club and the Protestant Community Centers, both of which serve the educational, recreational, and health and wellness needs of Newark youth.

By including community internships in the urban teacher preparation curriculum, we relied upon their potential to accommodate our students' gaps in experience in, understanding of, and appreciation for urban communities, gaps which cannot be filled as adequately by academic courses in multiculturalism and diversity alone. Along with coursework on-site in effective urban schools, we have found that the summer community internship is a key moment in the UTA students' development

(Goldstein & Onore, 2003, 2004; Onore, 2006). It provides students with the opportunity to work with young people outside of schools settings where they have the chance to share their dreams and talents. Such immersion in community work is also an occasion for the preservice teachers to construct images of urban families as caring and supportive, and to confront their stereotypical deficit beliefs and assumptions (Cooper, 2007). Our findings are similar to a body of research on the role of community-based knowledge in developing reflective, culturally responsive urban practitioners who are knowledgeable about community resources and who grow in their desire to participate with community based organizations ((Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; Gandy, Pierce, & Smith, 2009; Ladsen-Billings, 1999; Ladsen-Billings, 2001; Murrell, 2001; Quartz & the TEP Research Group, 2003; Shakespeare & Newton, 2003; Sleeter, 2001). Such work can even support preservice teachers in strengthening their commitment to being agents of change in their schools (Carter Andrews, 2009, p. 274). Combined with rich school-based experiences, preparation for urban teaching, such as that provided in the UTA, has real potential to affect teachers' understandings of students, communities, and families. However, such experiences will not automatically result in teachers' understanding the connections between their school-based work with the work of community-based organizations or how their work is an aspect of common work for common ends.

How the Partnership Began

The two co-authors met at a fund-raising event for the All Stars Project which ASP graduates attended. A few months later, they met again at a conference on preparing teachers for urban schools. At that time, the university sought opportunities to embed more community-based fieldwork in its course of study and the ASP was looking for a university partner to advance research and professional training on play and performance in outside-of-school youth programs.

Both of the authors had been involved in partnerships before and recognized that the focus on the same community was not sufficient grounds for an effective collaboration. Optimum partnership, it seemed to us, would require a commitment to the same central goal, in our case support for the development of the youth of Newark, and similar philosophical orientations. To achieve that shared goal, ASP is interested in involving others in investing in urban youth and MSU would like to educate teachers who understand that their work is community work. Over time we began to see that our objectives were two sides of the same coin—one side focused on getting young people ready to learn (learning how to learn, developing the taste for learning) and the other one supporting young people's actual learning through teacher education.

From Yinger's perspective, our partnership became a covenantal one. As we explored how we would work together, we began to see that our partnership could provide mutual benefits that went beyond being responsive to and supportive of one another's goals. We could articulate our needs and strengths and construct ways to

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maximize our strengths in service to one another's needs while seeking and finding in one another novel approaches to our work. Working together actually helped us to understand our work differently while it simultaneously helped us to develop our individual endeavors. It offered prospects for the renewal and enhancement of our individual and organizational endeavors by situating our work in new space between the university, the schools, and the community, thereby creating a new community, what Howey (1999) might call an interprofessional community.

Community Work: Situated Practice in an Interprofessional Community

In making a series of recommendations for the preparation of urban teachers, Howey (1999) situates learning to teach in the inner city in the intersection of inside and outside of school. He quotes Denis Sumara who understands schools as places that cannot be separated from their surrounding communities and, thereby, makes the case for the importance of teachers' deep knowledge and sense of unity with those communities. Sumara says:

First, involvement in the community group would help students to learn something about the places in which the schools existed. Second, the dual involvement in an urban school and in urban community organizations would help them to interpret the relationship between and among these so as to understand urban education as a component of the complexity of life in the urban community. (quoted in Howey, p. 34)

Beyond knowledge of the riches and resources of communities and the talents and dreams of urban youth, Howey is advocating a collaborative, "interprofessional culture" (p. 36). For teachers to enact their roles as public professionals, they would have to go beyond seeing education as a component of social life to education and the community as co-participants in the construction of a new and better community life.

Peter Murrell offers, perhaps, the most comprehensive and integrated framework for educating effective urban teachers in his model of the "community teacher" (2001; 2008), a central component of which is the "circle of co-practice." Of particular note for us is that these professional communities are reciprocal—community members have a voice in setting the goals for teachers of their children which can be incorporated into the course of study and standards of achievement for teachers, and educators provide support in addressing community needs. However, in the teaching cases that Murrell uses as his lens for exploring the reach and promise of the community teacher model, urban teaching candidates spend much of their time in school-like activities.

The power of the "community teacher" framework lies its central insistence on enhancing the capacities of schools to address the needs of learners through circles of co-practice. However, its power is diminished, we believe, to the extent that preservice teachers focus their community efforts on the exercise of their skills in service of enhancing school-based, individual achievement objectives alone. Rather, community teachers might align themselves more closely with the larger purposes of

cultivating civic virtue in the young and advancing the public good through a sense of shared responsibility for and commitment to community betterment.

Engaging Preservice Teachers in Outside of School Youth Development

In exploring what a partnership between MSU and the ASP would look like, we sought to address the limitations of our previous university-community arrangements. We determined that the summer community internships in the Urban Teaching Academy were missing two key ingredients that we sought to address in our new partnership. One was that the internships were, in essence, placements. Our partners had roles and responsibilities that needed to be filled and the preservice teaching candidates were well-placed to take on these roles. From the university side, we were pleased that there was room for our students to learn by working with young people in outside of school settings. But we engaged in very little work together to construct the roles and responsibilities of the students or to explore other opportunities for our students, outside of those that were already defined by the organization.

Overall, the majority of the internships ended up engaging the MSU students in school-like activities, primarily tutoring. By contrast, the ASP engages in youth development through activities that are “not school-like.” There is no deliberate teaching, and no focus on traditional academic skills and behaviors. The focus is on human development. Additionally, many community-based organizations center their work on addressing problems in the community. While we are certainly not arguing that this is not important work, we came to feel that a problem orientation was blocking the possibility for our students to imagine transformative possibilities. An unintended consequence of the community problem mind set is that it can reinforce the teaching candidates’ belief that they are “saving the poor children” (Ladsen-Billings, 2001) rather than engaging in practices designed to change the very conditions to which they are responding. The ASP also deliberately resists this outcome by engaging youth in activities and situations that center on experiencing imaginative possibilities. Young people get to create and perform life roles that are usually reserved for the already developed, already successful young person.

Our individual and collective past experiences led us to believe that we should and could work together to design experiences for urban teaching candidates that would engage them in working as activists for social change as they came to know and appreciate the young people and communities with whom they worked. Beyond that, we speculated that the students could come to see teaching as a facet of a larger social project and in so doing, to understand their roles as teachers and their relationships to communities as intimately yoked together, thus building a new community.

The Initial Collaborative Design

After learning about one another’s work, we sat down to invent the activities and

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assignments for our first cohort of teacher education participants. The initial design had four basic components: an orientation to the ASP on site at the high school where the university course met; participation in two core activities—the Development School for Youth (DSY) and the All Stars Talent Show; a mid-semester meeting at the ASP headquarters in Newark with a group of young people from the DSY; a final, in class reflection on the ASP with program and organization leaders. The university students were required to keep field notes from these experiences which would serve as data for a required paper on creating a community for learning. They were also asked to write a final reflection on the course and include their experiences with the ASP. Together, we designed several questions about the ASP experiences for them to address. These were the core components for two semesters.

In every activity the MSU students took on the roles of participant observers. During DSY visits, MSU students had the opportunity to spend several hours on a bus with the young people traveling to and from corporate sites. In workshops at the sites, MSU students participated in the activities alongside of the youth. Several MSU students visited orientations and rehearsals for the Talent Show and one became a regular volunteer who helped with the physical set up of the show and who ushered the audience of families and community members to their seats. When we met as a class at the ASP office, the university students came prepared with questions for the youth. Much to everyone's surprise, the youth had their own questions for the college students: Why did they want to become teachers? How did they make the transition from high school to college? This resulted in rich dialogue, a real exchange of perspectives in a dialogue among equals. For the young people this was a cosmopolitanizing experience. For the teachers-to-be, the dialogue radically altered their perceptions of urban youth.

At the end of the first two semesters of our partnership, we reviewed the written reflections from each cohort of university students. Several themes emerged. A number of students suggested that the experiences helped them reconsider their stereotypes of urban youth, as we had hoped:

It calmed me down. These were just adolescents...my future students were no longer this collage of categorizations and imaginations that I had been forming both in life and at MSU.

The more contact I had with the people who were my future students, the more textured my understandings of them became and the less likely I was to base those understanding on stuff I read or imagined.

Some wrote about performance as a pedagogical practice, something we had not anticipated:

I love the All Stars' concept for the ensemble performance. It helps students to see beyond themselves in so many ways. Students are more than individuals, more than their neighborhoods, more than their race, more than what society expects of them.

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I plan on incorporating performance into my teaching strategies by having students present to the entire class probably on a daily basis.

We were particularly struck by the insights of students who, by chance, had DSY youth as students in their student teaching classes. Recognizing that the very same young people appeared quite different in the outside-of-school setting, they remarked:

It has been a way to get me to think about how to create such a nurturing learning environment within my classrooms and possibly school.

I will continually look for each student's interests, skills and abilities to find ways of allowing my students to experience successes and through them grow more confident that they can venture out among the mainstream of life and business.

The idea that students who may not have much interest and participation in the classroom setting, do still have interests and things that get them excited, amazed me.

You cannot treat your students like children if you want them to act like young adults.

But they also recognized that who their students were outside of school was not only very different from their school personas but richer and better. One student wrote, "Because of the All Stars, I am able to see my students' other side and invite them to bring that side into the classroom." And another was able to imagine that students might learn even more in outside of school activities than inside of school and that schools need to make space for that learning: "Students grow and learn so much in [outside of school activities] that they end up bringing back to the classroom."

After reflecting on the insights of the participants, we couldn't help but feel that some of what they learned, they learned by chance and not by design. For example, only two MSU students got to see the DSY youth in their classrooms. In addition, we allowed the MSU students to engage in ASP activities by themselves. The only group sessions were those at the ASP headquarters and the Talent Show. We also recognized that, with performance occupying such a central place in the ASP approach, it didn't make sense for the MSU students to be mere observers of performances. They needed to be directly involved in performance themselves, not just witnessing it.

We made another interesting inference from the two semesters of feedback from the MSU students. During the second semester, the MSU course did not meet on-site in an urban high school. Even though these students attended the same activities as those from the first semester, their reflections revealed that, while they thought the work of the ASP was "awesome" they found little that they could translate into teaching and learning. That seemed to support our belief that the immersion in an urban school setting is an essential companion to the ASP outside of school experience.

The Collaborative Redesign

After reviewing the feedback we received from the MSU students and based on our first-hand observations, we decided to make a number of changes in our work.

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Several new or enhanced components are part of a new design currently being implemented. First, the MSU students visit DSY in pairs or small groups. That gives them an opportunity to reflect together on an in-common experience. We also jointly constructed guiding questions for reflection after the DSY visit that are designed to give us feedback and help the participants to make sense of the experience.

The mid-semester get together will involve all of us participating in a performance workshop in which directors, professors, DSY students and MSU students will come together and participate in movements and skits that are designed to engage them in unfamiliar situations. The point of these performance exercises is to create a new, shared experience that will make it possible for “youth” and “becoming teachers” to see and know each other as human beings and have a conversation in which they can relate to each other in ways that are different from their traditional roles.

An equally ambitious effort at redesign has gone into the creation of a Student Study. This project has three settings in which the pairs of preservice teachers participate and gather data. First, the DSY youth will be asked to volunteer to buddy with the MSU pairs. The MSU pairs will accompany their buddy to a DSY session and then visit them in their regular school setting for a day. The young person will also invite the pair of MSU students to participate in a home or community-based activity with them. This activity is one in which the young person normally engages: going to church or the mall, babysitting a younger sibling or visiting a grandparent, for example. As one young person said to her MSU partners, “You have to come to my church! I bet you’ve never seen anything like it!” This inquiry project has two key elements: the DSY youth are inviting and leading the MSU pairs into their contexts and the MSU students are posing their own questions about the three settings. Our belief is that through this work, the teaching candidates’ understandings of and appreciation for urban youth and communities will be enhanced and their desire to participate in positive youth and community development efforts will be ignited. We also hope they come to see their work as teachers differently.

Developing our Partnership and Ourselves:

An Agenda for Action and Research

It is too soon to speculate how our preservice education work will evolve, since the activities described in the redesign above are just underway. But we already have plans for other projects that will meet our individual and collective needs. The ASP cosmopolitanizing agenda calls for the participants to have experiences that are naturally part of growing up in a more affluent social milieu and that help young people develop sophistication about how the world works and nurtures their interests in and readiness to learn. As part of this agenda, the ASP has added visits to the MSU campus and attendance at teacher education classes where they will have the opportunity to meet and talk with preservice teachers, similar to what has happened at the group dialogues between MSU and DSY students at the ASP

headquarters. Additionally, we are beginning to explore the creation of a certificate program for afterschool professionals to be offered through the university and held at the ASP headquarters. This initiative will also support the development of a deep dialogue among educators situated both in school and outside of school.

The project of educating teachers to be public professionals may offer promise as a response to the long-standing concern in teacher education about the nature of its knowledge base. As Ken Zeichner (2010) has recently pointed out, “the old paradigm of university-based teacher education where academic knowledge is viewed as the authoritative source of knowledge about teaching needs to change to one where there is a nonhierarchical interplay between academic, practitioner, and community expertise” (p. 89). We believe our work suggests alternative ways for university-based programs to construct a course of study where community learning is collaboratively developed and carried out and where knowledge is situated in an interprofessional space.

Recognizing the importance of sharing our work with other teacher educators, we have begun to design a research agenda. There are several strands to this work. One centers on documenting the impact of the fieldwork in a positive youth development organization on new urban teachers. Another focuses on bringing together the insights of in school and outside of school researchers to develop a socially transformative collaborative agenda for urban communities. We also hope to contribute to an agenda set forth by Peterman and Swiegard (2008) to explore how to prepare urban teachers to meet standards that respond directly to the urban context. These include forming identities as partners in the education of urban youth with families and communities, a commitment to urban renewal and community activism, and developing “resiliency, resistance, and persistence” (p. 34), three attributes that, we believe, can be engendered through initiatives designed to educate teachers as public professionals.

Support for this conclusion can be found in a recent study of the impact on experienced teachers of participation in an afterschool parent involvement program (Schechter & Sherri, 2009). Findings indicate that the relationships between the school and the community, as well as between parents and teachers, changed significantly. Experienced urban teachers’ found that diversity was a resource, while parents were able to become vocal advocates for and strong participants in their children’s’ educations. Teachers began to see their surrounding communities as assets and become connected to the community through their relationships with parents. Likewise, parents “ became engaged in dialogue as equals” (p.80) with teachers and began to see the school as a place they could collaborate. Such research findings lend credence to the potential impact of educating preservice teachers as public professionals through community-based learning.

The early stages of the collaboration between the ASP and MSU’s teacher education program demonstrate the potential to help teachers to envision their work in new ways. We think that our graduates will be able to meet the highest profes-

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sional standards of content knowledge and teaching skill as well as the standards for effective urban teaching. Beyond that, they may also begin to conceptualize teaching as a public profession in which they “play crucial roles in the work of forming persons and forming citizens for democratic nations” (Yinger, p. 289). Such ways of thinking will be part of their understandings of themselves as educational professionals who are citizens with special purposes—to work together with those outside of school to achieve common goals. Their preparation to do this work will have given them first-hand experience in collaboration and will engender a kind of hope that is robust, grounded in present realities, with an eye toward future possibilities. This is the sort of hope that can only come from seeing ourselves in one another and constructing our world together and publicly as a common endeavor.

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